

THE BEST OF  
**CREATIVE  
WRITING**  
2015-2016

**EAST  
BARNET  
SCHOOL**



*"I want to learn"*



# INTRODUCTION

This has been quite a year.

When I started this club (an astonishing four years ago now) I had seven or eight regular students who came along every week. The group was so small that I was able to not only buy everyone a Christmas present\* but I dedicated one of my books (*Hold Your Breath*) to the students by individual name.

The club gradually grew larger in 2014 and 2015 but this year has seen an explosion in its popularity and size. The numbers began to rise from last September onwards, with the influx of new Year 7s. First there were twelve, then fifteen students, then eighteen, then twenty, then twenty-five and suddenly, there were more than thirty who might come at any time. That's more than a whole class. Something had to give.

Short of cloning myself (one 'helpful' suggestion) I needed to decide how I could take the group forwards. I wanted everyone to benefit, from those who like a peaceful, quiet atmosphere, to those who prefer things to be buzzier and more lively.

The solution was to make two groups, who meet fortnightly. At first people were disappointed that it had to be this way, but as things settled down and everyone got used to it, I've been impressed at how well people remember which week is 'theirs' and come along accordingly.

The size and success of this club is one of the proudest achievements in my working life as a writer and I am delighted that so many EBS students seem to enjoy coming along and taking part. As we head towards a new year, I'll wait and see how much the potential pool of students swells again.

But I might have to think about the cloning option after all...

I would like to thank Mr Christou yet again for inviting me into this wonderful school and letting me hang around for another year. But most of all, I want to thank the students for coming along every week and making me laugh, entertaining me, and wowing me with their fantastic creative writing.

I hope you will enjoy reading this booklet as much as I have enjoyed putting the students' work together.

Caroline Green | Writer in Residence  
carolinegreenwriter@gmail.com | June 2016

*\*PS Sorry about the recent lack of Christmas presents, gang. There are just too many of you now!*



## **TICK TOCK**

This was a topic we looked at early on in the year, and story prompts included the idea of a person who was obsessed with clocks. The students produced some very interesting work on this topic.



In a dark village, in the middle of the valley, there was a ticking. A relentless, never-ending ticking. This ticking came from one house in the middle of the village, in the middle of the night. And in this house lived a man.

He was a strange old man, who was obsessed with clocks. His house was full of them. In every corner, on every shelf, in every cupboard. You name it, it most definitely had clocks in it.

The villagers couldn't stand it. All through the night, all through the day.

The old man just paced around his room listening and looking at the clocks. Every now and again he would say angrily to himself, 'When? When? When?' And he would never stop pacing.

Now no one in the village knew anything about him or why he did this. He had been there for an awfully long time. When the children asked, 'How old is he?' their parents would say, 'He has been here since before me and before my parents could remember.'

Sometimes children would sneak up behind his house and look into his windows but all they would see is the tick tock clocks and the old man pacing up and down the house. The children found this a very odd sight. They also found it frightening; it was so eerie with just the tick tock of the clocks and him pacing, and every now and again him shouting, 'When? When? When?'

One day the old man came out of his house and shouted, 'Finally, it's here!' which disturbed the peaceful village afternoon.

Heads started popping out of windows, children poured out into the street and they all just stared at the old man running through the streets. He sprinted straight out of town then suddenly stopped at the gates. 'Where are you?' he cried. 'Why aren't you here? You promised!'

Crying, he slowly turned round and lumbered back to his house where he locked the door.

**JAMES TIVEY (Year 9)**



The silver chain shimmers in the sunlight, its snake-like body twisted in an unnatural shape. It isn't particularly heavy, nor especially light. It would be easy to forget it was there, before he slipped it into your pocket. The clock face is clear and open, the number is easy to read. Its apparent beauty is fake. It's hateful. But how can it be thrown away?

The watch is too fanciful and majestic to be thrown in a lowly bin. Maybe it would make a good present. But who to? A good friend?

Now I wonder who owned the watch in the first place, its silver charm can easily fool a stranger. The metal surrounding the watch face is carved into amazing patterns; simple but effective. The sunlight bounces off the watch and covers it in light.

**ELEANOR RACHEL (Year 7)**



As soon as I stepped inside the weathered old house my ears were ambushed by the deafening chimes of every kind of clock you can imagine. Within minutes my head was filled with them all going off at different times, as if they were arguing with each other.

Soon everything else became a blur, but the clocks, the clocks, stayed as clear as day. My head was spinning, and the noise seemed to intensify with every waking second I stood there, all random at different intervals but yet as one, calling to me, drumming deeper into my skull and every thought I had. The clocks. Trying to make sense of their uncoordinated chimes made me feel hazy. With each echoing sound I felt my memories float away until there was nothing but the clocks.

I can't tell if I'm asleep or awake. The clocks haunt me day and night, every moment the music that is being bashed deeper into my brain. The clocks are all; I live to hear them, tick-tock. After decades or days or weeks, I am still no closer to figuring out the odd pattern which has taken over me. Each day another metallic clang, changing, reforming, just out of my grasp. Everything is black but the noise, the noise is deafening. Or perhaps I have long since gone deaf, but can still hear the odd chimes lingering in my memory. That's all I am. Tick-tock. My sanity has drifted away from me and the loud clangs are all I have, for I am never truly alone.

The clocks will always be there, counting away my very existence, my every breathing moment. Until the end.

**BETH PETERS (Year 8)**



She looks around her bedroom, her milky blue eyes wild with excitement. She scratches the birds nest on her head and giggles maniacally when she reveals hands covered in little white snowflakes.

She runs down the stairs, chains with little clocks thrashing against her chest. She checks the time in Florida - 5 AM. She then checks another watch which shows the time in Rome - 12:30 PM. She lets out a squeal of delight again.

'Oh, isn't it wonderful?'

The walls are covered in different types of clocks and timepieces and almost every room is littered with ripped out of pages of history books. It's a real tip. Everywhere you go you seem to be ankle-deep in history. She loves it.

The doors burst open as she runs down the fields of overgrown grass, laughing as she sends a flock of birds to the sky. It is now 7:30 AM in Devon and the crazy clock lady grins.

**ROISIN TAMBIMUTTU (Year 10)**

**Another aspect of our 'time' theme was writing from the viewpoint of someone very elderly.**



The wind blew my hair back. Not that I have much left. The fresh smell of the forest overwhelmed me. When I entered the shrine I stopped trembling and felt different - as if I was young. When we played with hoops and sticks and kites. Those were the good old days.

I left my only place of serenity to go home, passing the gates, which said Central Park. I sighed and alighted onto the pavement, hearing a dog barking in the distance and a baby crying.

I took a step and there was a crunching sound, which reminded me of the autumns I had when I was young. The leaves were brushed away by the wind and I saw chewing gum on the floor.

'What has become of this place?' I asked myself and started walking. Turning right I saw a group of teenagers on tiny bicycles. I think they call themselves a gang. Look at them. All they do is go on those phones like mindless animals.



# OBJECTS

Every year when I go on holiday I look in junk shops for interesting artefacts I can include in a session known to my students as 'things in a bag'. On my travels last year I picked up a couple of items in a quirky old shop in St Ives, including a cigarette packet that dated from early last century.



The air was cooler away from the house. The waves crashed mercilessly against the side of the cliff, sending the pungent smell of salt spiralling away with the wind. He was a dark shadow, sitting in the wet grass on the edge of the cliff, watching the silhouettes of the gulls wheeling across the sky.

He rummaged in a pocket and produced a Players packet. The hiss and click of the lighter and the sudden burst of flame penetrated the still night air like a rock thrown into a still pool.

Cigarette in mouth and hands around his knees he watched the sea, ignoring the occasional sounds of revelry floating from the party.

The night deepened. The last streaks of purple sky fading to a dusky black, dotted with stars. He had almost finished the cigarette, the last wisps of smoke pouring from his lips, when another figure crossed the lawn. She sat down beside him as he wordlessly offered her the Players packet. She took one, lit it and placed it between her lips.

Together they listened to the now gentle lap of the waves. She leant her head on his shoulder and he placed his jacket over her bare arms. They sat there for a long while under the moon until, at last, they un-cramped their stiff limbs and left the cliff.

**LILY RACHEL (Year 10)**



# FAIRYTALES, RELOADED

I often use fairytales in teaching basic story structure because they can be perfect examples of strong plotting. When I asked the group to give classic fairytales a new spin, we ended up with some lovely writing.



Ella sighed and lay down on her bed staring at the ceiling. She heard the shouting of her stepsisters from downstairs; ranting about the latest fashion trends and relationships. She glanced down at her clothes, a loose t-shirt and a pair of scruffy jeans. Rags, compared to the majesty of her sisters' wardrobes. Hundreds of crop tops and high heels, tiny skirts laden with lace and sequins. Her sisters, you would spot from a mile off.

To be honest, Ella never cared about fashion or who was dating who. It was all rubbish to her. She picked up a book from her bedside counter and opened it; a scruffy bookmark falling onto her chest. Reading was a hobby her sisters often mocked her for,

'Who reads books?' Missy would snarl.

'Loserrr!' Amber would then proceed to apply a fifth layer of lip gloss and fix the mound of her hair lumped on top of her head like a mushroom.

Ella's mother wasn't much better.

Obsessed with jewellery, she was always rattling and clanking, with so many bracelets on her arms that Ella was surprised she could even move them.

'Why can't you be more like a NORMAL girl?' her mother would sneer, her face stiff and plasticky with Botox injections.

'Gosh, my whole family is made of Barbie dolls,' thought Ella, brushing her messy, knotted hair off her face.

**NATALIE SWATOWSKI (Year 8)**



I stared down at the crooked city beneath me. Small golden lights flicker in the windows, dotting the city with beady eyes of orange. What a wonderful reminder that everyone is watching.

The sky is a blanket of orange and pink, smothering for once blue sky. The new moon leaks its watery brightness into the sky, inking the glass palace with the tawny glow.

My corset seems to be sucking the life out of me; my breathing is hoarse and rapid. My crushed ribs push further to my insides, making my waist look like a toothpick with a slab of meat on top. The flowing gown walks with me as I glide along the corridor, glass pressing in on me. This is too much. The words ring in my head.

‘You’re not fit to be a princess’.

The words swim around inside me in a tangled mess of constant worries. All I seem to be hearing is the Queen’s voice. Her insults. Her unkindness. Her deceiving glare. She is like a bad Christmas present; you get excited to open it up and when you find a lunch box underneath the ribbon and paper it’s one of the biggest disappointments you can imagine.

Christmas is yet to come, and I am dreading sitting at that dreadfully long table, eating with people I barely know. And the smile plastered on my face. Fake. It’s all a lie.

**KATIE-MIA DIAMANDI (Year 8)**



Cindy was sitting on the corner of the estate. A gust of wind had sent the door slamming into the frame and the buzzer there had been smashed long ago. Not that Annie or Issy would've let her in anyway.

She could feel the damp paving slabs through the seat of her jeans as she gazed out over the park. A mash of gold red leaves covered the grass and a damp mist hung in the still air.

Cindy shuffled up against the brick wall. She watched a car go past and another, waiting for a tenant to open the door on their way in.

A figure appeared in the corner. Tall, straight-backed. Odd, on the estate, most people walked with a slouched swagger. Cindy leaned back, hoped he'd walk past without noticing.

He didn't. Instead he stopped. Stared. He had different clothes too. Smart. Shirt and chinos.

'What are you doing down there?'

She ignored him

'Bit dark isn't it? To be out alone, I mean?'

'Think I don't know that? Can't get in, can I?'

'Oh.' He seemed taken aback at her tone.

'Well, let me take you somewhere warm. A cafe or something.'

'Get lost will you? Don't need no Prince Charming.'

A long silence held the tension. Cindy got up, brushed herself down and walked off down the road.

'I'll have a skinny Frappuccino and I don't have no change so you're paying'. The cafe was crowded for a Friday night.

Steam fogged the windows and a low hum of chatter filled the room. Cindy sat on the bench by the window, hoodie wrapped around her, watching the trickles of moisture on the glass.

The guy came over and sat down next to her, pushing a steaming cup over.

'Like...thanks,' she said, not looking at him.

'It's fine,' he said.

They sat in silence for a while, listening to the conversations around them.

'So...' he said. 'What was the real reason you were sitting outside by yourself?'

'Get lost, Charming, I don't even know your name.'

'It is charming, actually. Charles Charming.'

'Yeah, right joker!'

'No, seriously!' he protested.

'For real?'

'Oh... you know.'

'No I don't,' Cindy smiled.

Charles grinned nervously back. 'Now you know my name, am I allowed to find out why you were out alone?'

Cindy's smile faded. 'Stepsisters locked me out, didn't they? They hate me.'



# FAN FICTION

I learned about a whole new world when I mentioned the words, 'fan fiction' to the groups. It seems this is an even more active writing community online than I had ever realised.

Everyone enjoyed this topic.

And I think it is clear that this writer knows his Harry Potter!

Albus Severus Potter was a wizard, also the son of legendary wizard, Harry Potter, defeater of Lord Voldemort. He was named after Albus Dumbledore, the greatest wizard ever seen. But he always felt overshadowed. Whenever someone laid their eyes on him they would think of Harry Potter.

But there were major differences between him and his father. For starters he wasn't treated like a slave – his parents Harry and Ginny were far more fair than Harry's aunt and uncle had been. Albus was fortunate enough to live in a cosy house in Godric's Hollow, far better than living in a grungy house in Little Whinging.

Albus was on the Hogwarts Express now and he was getting nervous. Crazy thoughts were passing through his head. Would he be in Slytherin along with the likes of Scorpius, son of Draco Malfoy? Would he be treated as an equal or treated like nothing, only respected because of his father?

He was thinking so hard he didn't hear Rose, daughter of Ron Weasley, asking him questions.

'What house do you think you'll be in?' she asked.

'Well, I dunno,' Albus replied. 'I just hope it's not Slytherin.'

'Oh well...are you scared of Professor McGonagall?'

'I will be if I'm not in Gryffindor,' said Albus dully.

Eventually she stopped asking him questions and pulled out The Daily Prophet.

The headlines read, 'Shacklebolt appoints Harry Potter Head Auror'.

Albus already knew about it because Harry had told him the news that morning. Kingsley Shacklebolt, Minister for Magic, had appointed his dad his dream job – Head Auror. An auror was a dark-wizard catcher. They would hunt dark wizards and when they found them they would lock them up in Azkaban, the wizarding prison.

His dad's new job had worried his mum, who'd said, 'Don't be an auror, Harry. You'll get hurt.'

He just said, 'Don't worry, I'll be extra careful.'

'I think we're almost there,' said Rose now. 'He looked up and saw the sign reading, Hogwarts Station.'

'We are!' he replied.

He could see Hogwarts. This was it...

## Being a big Doctor Who fan, I also liked the following fan fiction from Kristina.



‘Hello? Is there anyone here?’ I was back in Gallifrey, after the war that destroyed everything. ‘Come on,’ I called, ‘there have to be survivors!’ I stared around. All I could see were bodies. I tried to see if I could recognise anyone and instantly regretted it because I saw my best friend. She was holding a note, addressed to me.

She must have tried to find me. It’s all my fault. All of it!

I grabbed the note and ripped it into shreds. Why was everyone so unforgiving?

I’d heard that the Daleks were planning to attack us soon. I guess it was true that Daleks have no feelings. Cybermen were no better. But attacking children...how could they be that evil?

‘I’d better get out. They’ll be back,’ I whispered. I walked back to my TARDIS and stopped. I could hear a voice. ‘Help me!’ A child’s voice.

I ran to them then I saw a glint of metal. How could I be so stupid?

‘PREPARE TO BE UPGRADED.’

**KRISTINA FRAKULI (Year 7)**



# FANTASY

It was a series of short hops between fairytales, fan fiction and then fantasy writing. This type of fiction is very popular among the students and most people took to the tasks with great enthusiasm.



**H**is eyes are dark like the deepest oceans as he glares into your soul, burning your insides. His eyebrows furrow like grey clouds merging in the wind as he scowls, freezing all thought, shattering all of the love and happiness that was once there. His fiery hair, sharp as lightning frames the storm that was once his face. His hands are in fists tight, enough to crush metal. His every step is like the crashing of waves on rock.

His body holds the stench of sweat that covers him from head to toe. His voice is like the roar of thunder, making stars fall from the sky, and at this point in time he is no longer an angel but a monster from the innermost part of your nightmares. His shirt is being ripped off his shoulders as a set of golden wings sprout out of his back. Sweat is still pouring from his body as a long scaly tail shoots back, splitting his trousers in two. His screech is heard from miles away when all of a sudden he is no longer making any noise but breathing fire.

**ELLA MOSS (Year 8)**



The desolate, barren wasteland filled with rats was once called London. Just a few days ago the streets were filled with people going to work. The sad part was they didn't know they were going to die. I could almost imagine a husband saying goodbye to his wife and just as he turned around there was a white flash.

\*\*\*\*\*

Three weeks have passed since the bomb detonated and devastated this city, turning it into what it is today. Rubble. Just four months ago I finished my university course in Oxford. My life has had its vicissitudes, with good times and the bad. I remember when I got my university results and when I got rejected for the first time in secondary school. All these thoughts overwhelm me now. But they mean nothing. They are dead, the people I loved and held dear to me, just like my memories. The only way I can survive is to let go of the memories. Otherwise it will drive me mad. Or at least, more mad than I already am.

**OMED ZARIFI (Year 10)**



Leaves and twigs crunched quietly under his bare feet. I followed him, darting between the looming trees. My own bare feet felt sore after being constantly pricked by thorns and nettles. The figure in front of me glanced back over his shoulder. I pressed myself up against a tree, trying to hold my breath. Please don't see me, don't see me, I thought, the sound of heavy breathing cutting the heavy silence.

I squeezed my eyes shut as the heavy metal blade touched my neck.

'Mission failed,' said the man, his low voice sweet as a cello. I sighed.

Carl looked back at me. 'That's seven times now, Izzy'.

'I know,' I answered. It's just so hard.' I slicked back my silky black hair from my face.

'You're never going to be a bandit, if you can't master the art of silence or stealth,' said Kyle, sighing with exasperation.

I turned back in the direction of the camp.

'Well, at least I managed to follow you for... ' I checked my watch. '...ten minutes, and anyway, I'm not meant to be a bandit. I'm much better at building things'.

Kyle rolled his eyes.

'One, I knew you were behind me for the whole ten minutes. Two, building things is not going to help you if you have to follow someone. Three, your father is the lead bandit, a master of stealth and the king of silence. You have to follow his example. Anyway it's late. We should be getting back. Lucky I brought a truck here earlier on'.

I was tempted to disagree and walk back to camp. But it was cold and I haven't bought a jacket. I was desperate for some shoes. Fortunately, the truck was warm and we were soon back at camp. I ran off to my tent without even saying thank you to Carl.

**ELEANOR RACHEL (Year 7)**



It started with an odd feeling of light headedness. A strange tingling in her head. She brushed it off as nothing and carried on with her day as usual. By midday she noticed she had a bit more of a spring in her step and as the hours went by, she found it increasingly difficult to walk. Her legs seemed to be working against her, floating to the sides of where she wanted to place them.

By the time she got home she felt as if she was barely touching the floor at all. The dizziness was overpowering and the light feeling had spread to her whole body. She panicked, her heart beating fast and she started to run to the phone.

But halfway there her feet left the ground. She let out a yelp and struggled to grab the table as she began to rise, unsteadily, off the ground.

**NATALIE SWATOWSKI (Year 8)**

## The Wool-Eye



I woke up in panic. My eyes were blazing, my head racing! I couldn't breathe properly. My lungs felt like fire piercing through my flesh and my heart pounded like the drumming paws of a panther trying to tear its way from my chest.

I leapt from my bed and glared at myself in the mirror. "No..." I said, my eyes beginning to tear up. Each drop smelled like burning acid. My pupils, my irises... They were covered in lines of red like tangled yarn tied in a ball! This was it... I had the Wool-Eye.

I stepped back in fear and looked down at my pale hands. 'Wait a second,' I thought. 'I'm a Shapeshifter!' I quickly swiped my hand across my eyes, shifting them away.

I snatched up a piece of paper and a pen and wrote, "I'm sorry to whomever may read this for I am now gone. I woke with a burning pain, the pain of the Wool-Eye. I am sorry I have left so that I may die without hurting you. Please do not cry. I don't want to hurt you. Goodbye, MAJOR.

I spread wings from my back and I opened the window. I sat on the ledge. 'Do I really want to do this?' I thought. But there was no turning back.

I leapt from the edge and flew, flying higher and higher. I couldn't let anyone see me! I broke through the clouds. Altitude sickness was setting in. I pushed off the ill feeling and flew on. After a while my energy drained. I had vomited twice. I needed to land. 'No, I can't stop now! I've only just crossed the border!' I thought.

I dipped below the clouds. I tried to fly higher but I couldn't take it.

The ground grew closer and closer...

**KAYA ALEXANDER (Year 7)**

## The Strange Library Book



He warned me about the book but now it was too late.

I tried to get rid of it, I threw it in the bin, I tore it to shreds. I wanted to get away from it but somehow it made its way back every time, sliming into my brain and haunting my dreams.

I found the book in an old library at the end of the street. The windows were all dirty, the paint was crackling and flaking.

I stepped into the library and the door creaked behind me. The store smelled like old must, the books were covered in dust suddenly I heard a voice. It was old and frail and I turned around to find an old man. He was looking at me, staring, but didn't say a word. And then something caught my eye across the room. There was the book, the spine was glittery green, the words on the spine bright gold. I moved closer to see what the book said. It just said: If you dare

I looked at the blurb. It was empty. It sounded like a horror story and as I love horror movies and books, I decided to try it out.

As I moved to the counter I pulled out a small rectangular library card and handed it to the old man. Hopefully it was acceptable – the card was probably as old as the shop and the man. The man's eyes widened in shock as I placed the book down on the counter.

## Firestarter



**S**parks. That's how it always started, sparks dancing around his fingertips, like ballerinas dressed in red and gold.

Then came the feeling, the feeling that the whole world could be burning in front of him. It was always this feeling that jumpstarted the glorious fire that was in his hands.

Finally the show would begin. A flame would start between his hands and make its way outwards, covering whatever he desired in magnificent burning heat.

It hurt, but he enjoyed the pain, embraced it and let it devour his whole body and nibble away at his soul. By now his body was a patchwork of seared flesh and his soul was a husk of its former self. But he didn't mind because the fire has to be fed. And he is more than happy to feed it.

**TYMI PECHERZEWSKI (Year 8)**

## **Tymi then wrote this as a companion piece. (Hot, then cold...)**



She skipped happily down the dimly-lit alley, 'I'm dreaming of a white Christmas.' As the heels of her black leather boots touched the cobbled road, the weeds around them shrivelled up and withered away while ice covered the small grey stones.

'Just like the ones I used to know.' Snow was beginning to form above the alley and snowflakes started to fall, dancing on the gentle breeze that flowed through her icy white hair. 'Where the treetops glisten.' The small shrubs which grew out of the dirty, brick walls were now black spider webs of frozen twigs.

'And the children listen, to hear the sleigh bells in the snow.' She stopped before the entrance of the orphanage, her orphanage, or at least it had been before the accident. Now it would be hers again.

Frost spirals were beginning to grow up the walls as ice followed closely behind, soon the door was cracking from the intense freezing it was exposed to. She blew a kiss at the door and it shattered inwards. Humming a gentle Christmas tune under her breath she made her way to the courtyard. The fountain began solidifying, water froze in mid air and shattered upon impact with the snowflakes around it. The icy spirals continued to grow around her and a throne of pure ice emerged from the air. She took a seat and finished her cold song.

'May your days be merry and bright, and may all your Christmases be white.'

## The Magic Ship



**I**t all began when someone left the window open. The idiot. The ocean liner known as Ursula was known for strange happenings, which was why the captain was so strict about who came on and who didn't.

Last year the ship became invisible and could only be seen when the captain swung his lantern three times. But even then you'd only be able to see it for an hour or so.

The year before that a railway appeared in the middle of the ocean and the boat turned into a train. You see, strange happenings always... well... happen when Ursula is concerned. But this year, this year was supposed to be different.

The captain had been so sure that its crew was at least competent. But obviously not, because the ship was moving in the wrong direction. Even with her mighty engines in reverse, the ocean liner was pushed further and further into the canal. Closer and closer to her. The one person who caused all of this.

The witch.

But this time she had gone too far.



The Captain had once been a bright young prospect. His knowledge was admirable and he learnt fast. However, as all accomplished sailors know, crossing vast expanses of empty ocean can play havoc with one's mind. The Captain, with his once bright future, had fallen victim to this and his once great mind was not as it had been. His reliance on his First Mate to map and chart their passage and to actually steer the ship had increased over the years until his own role seemed to be nothing more than the ship's figurehead.

As he descended into the hold his stomach felt the warm pleasure of his third brandy of the day. While listening to the first mate's reply he thought vaguely how nice it would be to stop for a while, leave the ship, stay in the pretty houses that lined this place. Venice was it? It didn't particularly matter where it was really. As long as there were music halls and liquor stores.

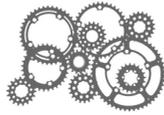
The First Mate came to the end of his report and stood waiting expectantly.

"Ah, yes, jolly good First Mate. You go and do that, if you don't mind," said the Captain, waving a vague hand of affirmation.

The First Mate looked slightly disgruntled for a moment, then strode off up the stairs calling men as he did so.

The Captain settled down on a crate contentedly, oblivious to the sudden renewed rush of activity around him, and the occasional crash. As soon as this little misdemeanour was sorted he would disembark for the nearest matinee performance.

## The Clockwork Fairy



**H**er hinged legs elegantly dancing against my finger, pearls of compressed liquid silver that are her eyes gaze down into the wrinkles and imperfections of my fingers.

She seems to be intrigued by the swirling branch-like grooves in my flesh. Since our first encounter I have been spellbound by her wings, the minute cogs in a slow turning harmony of entrancing silence. She's like the flame to a candle, hypnotic and truly beautiful. She still hasn't spoken since we met. She just lets her cogs turn.

In my dark bedroom she seems to be the only light. Conscious of her on my thumb I allow sleep to guide me. A light illuminates my workshop. In my head I am engulfed by the memories of the past.

**KATIE-MIA DIAMANDI (Year 8)**



Their crimson red eyes stared blankly at the floating bubble. It was mostly transparent, with no light surrounding; the only other colour was jet black. The bubble rang with an eerie noise that reflected and echoed in their dreams.

But all these properties were not what most intrigued them; it was the deathly feeling of hopelessness which they endured, as they floated inside the bubble. It seemed unbreakable, the atoms so tightly packed. It floated and moved in an irregular pattern. They tried to stand up but the bubble rolled heavily to one side and their legs sank into the bubble's watery skin.

They kept floating around through the ice-thick darkness, but the sky did not seem to be moving. If it was not for the bubble's constant spasms, they would think they were standing still.



I woke up in shock. The white bedsheets were on the carpet in a heap, my body was completely flat on the mattress. I placed my sweaty palm on my forehead. Piping hot.

I slowly sat up as my sweaty body tore apart from the sheet and turned to face the cuckoo clock on my wall. 1:26 AM.

I began to lift my legs off the bed and suddenly, a force was thrashing me down onto the sheets. I tried to scream for help but when I opened my mouth nothing came out. Simply silence. I struggled and tried to get out of the grasp of this force.

I don't know why, but I just couldn't move. My body was in a kind of trance. The force let go then and I could finally breathe. I ran upstairs to the bathroom and turned on the lights, then stared at myself in the mirror. My face was red and sweaty, salty tears running down my cheeks. What just happened and why?

**BOBBI SMITH (Year 7)**



# LOST IN SPACE

Sometimes an unusual pairing of ideas can prompt some really interesting writing. We looked at the image of an astronaut in full gear, sitting in the middle of a shopping centre. How might he have got here?



I stare into the distance, a lonely pigeon pecking at my feet. We are quite alike, both solitary souls wishing for something more.

A sigh inflates my padded space suit and I look up at the yellow world around me, tinged with black. Yellow because of my face shield, black because nothing seems to matter any more.

I think about what they'll be doing at training, imagine them working out, solving puzzles and learning survival skills. I would have done anything to be with them. I would do anything to see the universe for what it really is, to watch the sun illuminating the Earth and discover planets I never knew existed. I've always wanted to be an astronaut. Mother had warned me as a child that it was a lonely job. But a pit of disappointment and loneliness is threatening to engulf me now I didn't make the final cut.

The pigeon hops up onto my knees and for a moment I'm lifted out of my depression. I reach into my rucksack and feed him a half-eaten sandwich. The bird gobbles it up and takes flight.

Back to suffering. If I can't be an astronaut and what on earth can I be? Nothing! That's just the thing, I'm no good to anyone on this planet. Perhaps I could have been, elsewhere in the universe, but now I'll never know.

'Thomas! Thomas! Is that you?' My mother's face is right in front of my screen. I lift off my helmet and feel cool fresh air on my face. I squint at the blinding sun and at my mother.

'Well how did it go?' she says, enthusiastically clapping her hands.

'I didn't make it mum. I wasn't picked.'

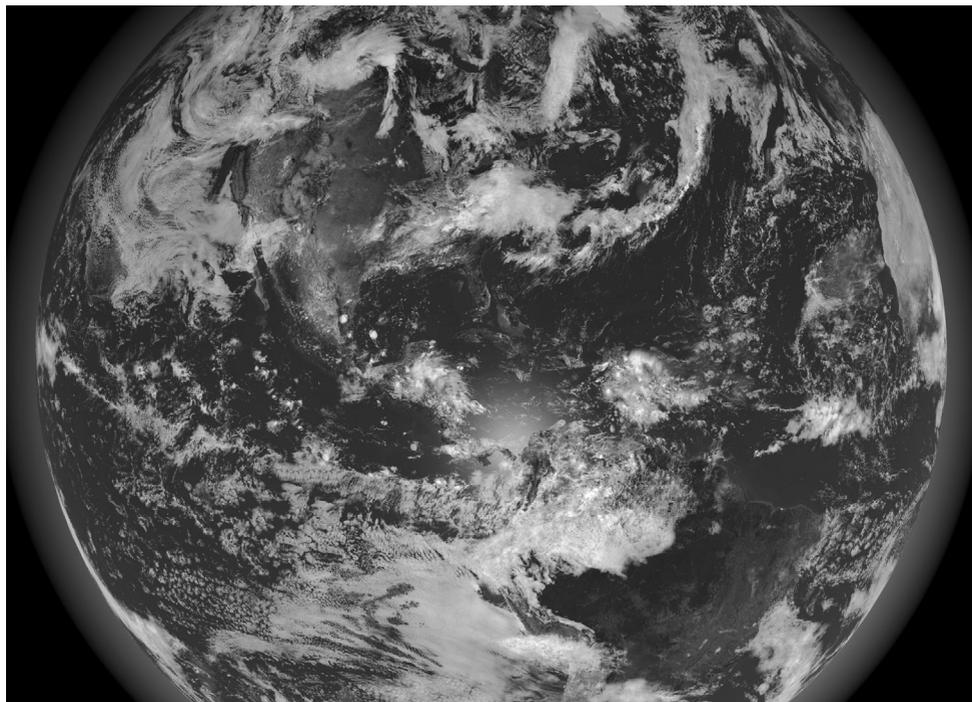
The broken words hang in the air for a few moments and the smile fades from her face. And pulls me into her arms.

'It's okay, love. You don't have to prove yourself to anyone. I still think you're great, whether you're out up there or down here, you're still doing good. I know you will.'

I feel that some weight has lifted from my shoulders. I grab her hand and she gives mine a squeeze.

'Let's go, Thomas,' she whispers and we walk off into the distance together.

**ROISIN TAMBIMUTTU (Year 10)**



# **THE LONELY STARMAN**

I think I must have still been reeling from David Bowie's death when I suggested this one. But I'm glad I did, or I'd never have got to read this!



I light a fire. It's not as hard as I expected, but the result seems underwhelming. I gaze into the now roaring flames that lick the twigs on my bonfire, the crackling soft in my ear.

I look up and see the stars and wonder how far Jupiter is from here. I try and see it, but can't. I've looked at the stars before and seen constellations: Mars and Venus, but never Jupiter.

I turn to lie on my left, popped up against some rocks and something bright yellow catches my eye. It is my lunchbox. I look at the front and see my friend, waving. A frozen snapshot of time which I can remember so clearly. It was when I first left and he was there waving... crying.

The ruins of some once wondrous star-hopping marvel now lie as rusted pieces of twisted metal and crushed glass in some forest somewhere.

I hear the crackling of twigs and somehow know it's not my fire. I'm almost completely sure now that I'm not alone any more. I stand up, grab my firearm and hold it up, the scope just in front of my eye.

I look around to no effect. No one is there. Sometimes I like this uncertainty but mostly I miss home. I miss the thin wind and seeing children in a park running gleefully around some swings. But now I only stare into the darkness, unsure if there is anybody there.

Suddenly some bushes begin to shake more severely and out jumps a wild dog, a German Shepherd I believe. It barks at me, loudly, poised as if it might pounce at any second. It's lost its owner. I can tell that by the way it's growling and gritting its teeth that it is a lost cause. Probably used to protect its master from the harshness of this world, but soon found out there's nothing left here at the loneliness.

I can that the dog is different to how a dog should be. It's more muscular and its eyes are greener and its skin looks scalded in parts, its teeth chunky and misplaced. The horrors of radiation. I'd hate to see a human.

Of course they deserve it... They made this mess for themselves. That dog couldn't have changed its fate because when the bombs hit, everything changed.

But as the dog begins to run towards me, I spare no remorse for its nature and tighten my finger on the trigger of my ray gun, killing it instantly. I look back at my lunchbox and think, 'How I miss home, old friend.'

**JAMIE WILLIAMSON (Year 10)**

## **Jamie also wrote about an unusual sculpture known as The Last Human.**



**C**rippled. Deformed and rustic. The land decimated, mined, scorched and charred and long since dead. A soft breeze hurts his bones. The burning sun...he can feel it under his skin.

He looks longingly into the glass and sees the green vegetation. The grass, untouched by the dust that consumed everything else.

He looks agitated, in deep thought, barely moving for fear of wasting the last bit of energy left in him. He just needs to stay still for another six months and then the tree will begin growing apples. It's up to him. Does he plant the apple seeds? Or does he eat them, taking every last bit of energy?

He just thinks. It'd surprise anyone, just how much he has to think about.

He wishes he could have done something, but there's nothing. No alternative route. His cybernetic arm aches. 'They didn't bother to put a pain sensor in it,' he thinks but hatred is futile. He scans the ground for bugs but there are none. They were gone years ago...or was it months?

Every minute is longer than the last. So he stops. He says to himself, 'I will take one breath of fresh, true air and rid myself of this hopeless fantasy. What point is there in life if all I can do is live?' He contemplates this. His cyborg arm still has some power left. He's been leaving it to charge in the sun but it's worthless junk. He uses his last bit of energy to ease his arm behind his head and begins undoing his face mask. As he lowers it he gets a breath of the outside air. Regret. Stupidity. He feels deluded, hopeless, the horrible foul air filling his eyes, ears, mouth, nose...

The dust; he feels it covering his throat, poisoning his lungs. Looking down in desperation at his mask he falls to the ground, weak. With one gasp of air his eyes begin to tighten; he's squinting now, reaching out for his mask, pulling it towards his face and pressing it against his mouth, breathing in the air from the small glass dome once again. He'd but the dust fills his eyes. Nothing but dust.

**JAMIE WILLIAMSON (Year 10)**



## Legend of the Sunbreaker

'What does it mean to be a Titan? It means to protect our lost city in a way that nobody else understands. Over decades we were the last hope of the city. As the Sunbreakers.'

This is what I just read.

'What does this mean?' I asked myself. 'What is a Titan? What is the lost city?'

When I read more I came across a sentence that wasn't clear...

...'The lost city is the last safe place on Earth.'

'Earth? What is that?' I thought to myself. After I had stopped reading I tried to look for the map of the universe...

'Venus, Mars, Sun, Moon, Saturn...but no Earth.'

'Hi, Kynstall!'

*Oh no...it's Koby...*

'So what are you looking at?'

'Well, it's a map of the universe.'

'Oh, I love Venus!'

'We *live* on Venus.'

'So what are you looking for?'

'Earth.'

'*Earth?* What's that?'

'I don't know. That's all I remember...'

I must have passed out because now I'm in...am I dead?

Then I heard a weird noise.

'I'm your ghost,' said a voice. 'I was sent here by the Traveller. You are a Titan. You need to help protect Earth.'

**OSKAR MLECZAK (Year 7)**



# **THE BEST MEDICINE**

Although lots of these pieces are serious, we also have some great comic writing coming from the group. And every week is filled with laughter, one way or another!

## The Reluctant Monster Support Group



‘I am Dracula. Count Dracula,’ I said at the monster support group. Big Foot crouched in the corner, distraught after his recent cancer scare. Frankenstein was all bandaged up after he caught the wrong end of the Monster Olympic Games. But I had a worse problem.

I continued, ‘And I don’t think I want to be the bad guy anymore. I quit Monsters Inc!’

Bowser roared. Gandorf shouted and the Grinch ran away in tears.

‘Being the villain is in your blood, Drac! Without evil you are just some sad cannibal who hides in the dark all day and needs some dental work done! You are a villain and there is no changing that!’ boomed Gandorf.

‘Never have I heard something so preposterous in all my years!’ screeched Bowser. ‘Who would even think something like that?’ yelled Bigfoot.

One by one the monsters stared accusingly at me, shook their heads, and left. Never had I felt so alone and so crowded at the same time. Solitary as a free spirit, yet as packed as a child’s imagination. A child’s imagination? What’s wrong with me?! My throat roars, roars with thirst for blood but my mind wishes to be of those whose blood I thirst for. I am confused. The silver stake that I own just in case, has never looked so attractive.

Goodbye villains. Keep on scaring...

**ALEX SCHWALLER (Year 10)**



# IF YOUR PETS COULD SPEAK

We had a couple of highly entertaining sessions looking at what sort of conversations might take place between your pets while you are out of the house. What, for example, would happen if there was a new, human, arrival?



So there I was. It was a totally normal day, then my masters came home. They had this weird thing in their arms. It was screaming and crying but they were just smiling and making weird faces at it.

The worst thing about this though was that they completely ignored me! They'd forgotten about me for days and only put food out twice in one week. This thing had to go. Why would they buy something like this?

It never stops screaming and crying and it's just painful. So I was just going to my special cupboard that I slept in but it wasn't there. In its place was what looked like a mini prison.

So I thought, did they get a new bed for me because they feel bad? I jumped up onto the edge of it and guess what I saw? It was an outrage! The thing!

I had to talk to them! Then I realised I couldn't speak human...

Next, I overheard something terrible.

'We can't keep them both. It costs too much'.

But I'll be okay. I've been here longer! They'll throw it away.

They love me too much!

**JAMES TIVEY (Year 9)**



CAT: Congratulations, idiot. You've upset the spawn of Satan.

DOG: Dragon, please, I am your FRIEND. Want to play TUG OF WAR!

*Cat sighs and walks up to Dog, pushing him away from the child.*

OWNER: Josh! Tyler! Leave Lucy alone!

DOG: Where is Owner's stomach? It was BIG and now it is...NOT?

CAT: Are you always this stupid or is today a special occasion? Actually, no. Calling you stupid is an insult to all stupid people.

DOG: Wow, Tyler, that HURTS.

CAT: Don't feel bad. A lot of people have no talent.

DOG: I'm leaving...

CAT: Dang, leaving so soon? I was just about to poison the tea.

**EVAN MOORES (Year 8)**

## **If a cat and a dog are going to have an argument, there's only ever going to be one winner, isn't there?**



DOG: Do you want to play?

CAT: Leave me alone.

DOG: Come on, let's play!

CAT: PERSONAL SPACE!

DOG: Please...I'm not even a metre near you.

CAT: TOO CLOSE! TOO CLOSE! I CAN SMELL YOU FROM HERE!

DOG: When do you think they'll be back?

CAT: Don't care.

DOG: But you might miss your dinner...

CAT: THEY'D BETTER COME BACK SOON OR I'LL EAT YOU!

DOG: But you can't...we're friends.

CAT: You're an idiot.

DOG: I love you.

CAT: OH MY GOD, CAN YOU SHUT UP?

DOG: Don't you love me too?

CAT: No.

DOG: I know you really do...

CAT: HELP! PLEASE SOMEONE HELP ME GET AWAY FROM HIM!

DOG: So when are they coming back?

CAT: You already said that.

DOG: But when..?

CAT: I hate you.

DOG: I can't wait for them to come back.

CAT: Yeah. I kinda got that impression.

DOG: When are they coming back then?

CAT: OH MY GOD!

DOG: When do you think-

CAT: -SHUT UP! SHUT UP!

DOG: So, are you hungry?

CAT: I can't believe I'm stuck with you.

DOG: I'm hungry.

CAT: END MY SUFFERING.

DOG: When they get back, do you think they'll feed us?

CAT: I. Don't. Care.

DOG: Can I have your food too, then?

CAT: You touch my food and you will regret it. For the rest of your life. I will personally pluck your eyes out with my claws if you don't shut up and you can LEAVE MY FOOD ALONE!

DOG: I love you.

DOG: You're so perfect.

CAT: I know.

DOG: When do you think they will be back?

CAT: KILL ME.

**BETH PETERS (Year 8)**



# POETRY

We don't cover a lot of poetry... mainly because I don't know how to write it!  
But Kaya and Ben certainly do, as you'll see.

Fear and love  
Day and night  
Cruel and shy  
Hate and like  
Death or life  
Two different forms  
One of light  
For all to see  
One of dark  
For none to be  
And this will start  
When he dies  
Beneath the Ark

**KAYA ALEXANDER (Year 7)**

A Good Man never weeps  
A Good Man never speaks  
A Good Man never keeps  
Secrets deep inside  
But they also wait for them to die  
A Good Man gets what he wants  
A Good Man lets himself get swamped  
A Good Man never gets what he wants  
Secrets deep inside  
But they wait for them to die  
“It’s not his age that makes him old, it’s the people he has met.  
His eyes have tales to be told and a ton to forget”

**BEN TIVEY (Year 10)**

# THE BEST OF CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

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